REMARKS

Applicants affirm election of Group I for consideration on the merits. Claims 8-12, 18 and 19 remain pending. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The drawings were objected to due to inconsistencies that were noted with respect to reference numerals 24 and 25. It is respectfully submitted that the above amendments to the specification cure such inconsistencies as the valve prosthesis is now consistently identified by reference numeral 20, the hose shaped wall of the prosthesis as reference number 24 and the valve leaflets as reference numeral 25.

Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35USC102(b) as anticipated by Kensey et al (USPN 4,753,221). The cited reference is directed to a blood pump that is cable-driven from outside the body (col 3, line 30) and that employs an inflatable balloon for anchoring the device in place (col 5, line 13) either upstream or downstream of the valve (Figs. 2 and 6). The rounded longitudinal cross-section of the balloon would appear to effectively preclude its use to dilate the aortic valve, let alone a stenosed aortic valve, as such shape would cause the balloon to shift proximally or distally upon inflation. In fact, the description at col 6, line 35-39 specifically contraindicates the use of the device for such purpose. In stark contrast thereto, the device of the present invention comprises a device specifically designed for dilating a stenosed heart valve while actively pumping blood therethrough. Independent claim 8 is distinguishable over this reference as the claim language clearly calls for balloon to be **configured** for breaking up a stenosis of a cardiac valve while positioned within such valve. In contrast to the rounded balloon of Kensey, Fig. 2 illustrates a balloon shape of a balloon capable of dilating a stenosed valve wherein its rectangular longitudinal cross-section is a manifestation of the "configured for..." limitation. It is respectfully submitted that such limitation serves to effectively avoid anticipation. Moreover, in view of the fact that the cited reference does not address

the problem of dilating a stenosed valve and in fact teaches directly away therefrom, it is respectfully submitted that a solution to such problem, let alone the solution specifically claimed herein, cannot be considered obvious thereover.

Claims 10-13 were rejected under 35USC103(a) as obvious over Kensey et al in view of Cribier et al (USPN 4,777,951). In view of the patentability of the underlying independent claim as is argued above, it is respectfully submitted that any claims depending therefrom effectively avoid obviousness. It is also to be noted that the stiffness of the catheter as taught in the secondary reference refers to its resistance to distortion upon grasping or thrusting and is silent vis-à-vis its resistance to collapse upon inflation of the balloon. Moreover, the reference teaches away from the present invention to the extent that a substantial blood flow about the exterior of the balloon rather than through an interior passage is established upon inflation of the balloon (col 3, lines 22-24).

Dependent claims 18 and 19 were added to claim additional features of the device of the present invention.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, applicants earnestly believe the application to now be allowable and respectfully request that it be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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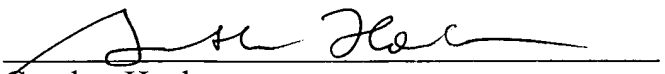
By: 

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